

## PIONEERS IN AURA RESEARCH

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## Paracelsus (1493–1541)

Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim was a 16th-century alchemist and physician. He later titled himself as Paracelsus ("greater than Celsus" of Rome). To esoteric scholar Manly Hall, Paracelsus was a Hermetic philosopher who was acknowledged by occultists as the greatest physician of all time.

At the age of sixteen, Paracelsus entered the University of Basle where he studied alchemy, surgery and medicine. He travelled extensively throughout Europe and is said to have visited India, where he discovered the pain-killing properties of opium. Later he returned to the University of Basle as a professor of medicine and surgery. Paracelsus followed no particular religion but was impressed by Martin Luther, who started the Reformation. He was widely acknowledged as the Father of Pharmacology, having introduced opium, mercury and various minerals into medicine as well as having discovered the element hydrogen. His radical medical theories and practices aroused the ire of the more conservative physicians who still followed the medical tenets of Galen.

Attacked as an eccentric—or worse, a lunatic—Paracelsus believed that humans exude a "vital force" which surrounds the body like a "luminous sphere". He was a harsh critic of contemporary medicine, and his comments alienated him from his fellow physicians: "You poison the people and ruin their

health, you are sworn to use diligence in your art...but all your boasted science is nothing but an invention to cheat and deceive." (Regush, p. 3)

He also believed that human beings are composed of seven distinct principles, with the elementary (physical body) being the first, the sidereal (or astral body) the second, and others including intelligent, rational and spiritual bodies.

According to Paracelsus, all organic functions are caused by the activity of one



Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim  
("Paracelsus"), 1490–1541

universal principle of life called *archaeus*. This is a spiritual essence, ever present and invisible, which may cause or cure a disease according to the body's condition. The *archaeus*, or *liquor vitae* ("life fluid"), constitutes the invisible

man, "the invisible nutriment from which the visible body draws its strength". (Regush, p. 9). The vehicle for the *archaeus* is the *mumia*, and the most universal form of the *mumia* is the *aether*, although plants, animals and other substances can also act as conveyors of the life force.

"The *archaeus* is of a magnetic nature, and attracts or repulses other sympathetic or antipathetic forces belonging to the same plane. The less power of resistance for astral influences a person possesses, the more will he be subject to such influences. The vital force is not enclosed in man, but radiates (within and) around him like a luminous sphere (aura) and it may be made to act at a distance... It may poison the essence of life (blood) and cause diseases, or may purify it after it has been made impure and restore the health." (Paracelsus, *Paragranum*; translated by Franz Hartmann)

The *archaeus* is an essence that is contained in the nature and character of all beings and is equally distributed throughout the human body. It contains the elements of all cosmic influences (stars, planets, Sun, Moon, etc.) and therefore enables these cosmic forces to influence the invisible body of man.

"All diseases, except such as come from mechanical causes, have an invisible origin, and of such sources popular medicine knows very little... Some (physicians) poison their patients with mercury;

others purge them or bleed them to death. There are some who have learned so much that their learning has driven out all their common sense, and others who care a great deal more for their own profit than the health of their patients." (Regush, p. 10)

According to Paracelsus, control of the mumia of an animal or plant enables a person to divert the flow of *archaeus* to its own uses. These "lower life-forms" often assimilate the disease of humans, thus relieving the patient. When the lower life had either assimilated the foreign mumia from the patient, or itself died from this mumia, complete recovery resulted. Many years of investigation were needed to determine which herb or animal most readily accepted the mumia of each disease.

Paracelsus also discovered the occult properties of the magnet and founded the School of Animal Magnetism. These ideas would come into fruition centuries later with the theories of Dr Mesmer.

In the 19th century, Paracelsus's theories on the seven bodies of man and the *liquor vitae* were embraced by the Theosophists, who called this subtle force *prana* and the "sidereal body" the "astral body".

Paracelsus was possibly one of the most underrated minds of the Renaissance.

## References

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- Nicholas Regush (ed.), *The Human Aura*, Berkley Medallion Books, NY, 1974 (includes Paracelsus quotations translated by Franz Hartmann)

## Baron Karl von Reichenbach (1788–1869)

**K**arl von Reichenbach, born in Stuttgart, Germany, was a scholar of high merit with doctorates in natural sciences and theology. He also made contributions in the chemical, geological, metallurgical and meteorological sciences. The baron established ironworks in Baden, charcoal furnaces in Hausach and Baden, chemical works in Blansko, Moravia, steelworks in Türrnitz, Austria, and blast furnaces in Gaya, Moravia. He also discovered paraffin, kerosene, phenol, creosote, picamar and

many other substances which were eagerly embraced by the chemical, industrial, food and medical industries, making him a very wealthy man.

Reichenbach became interested in studying the powers of people he referred to as "sensitives". Around 1850 he published his *Researches on Magnetism, Electricity, Heat, Light, Crystallisation and Chemical Attraction in their Relation to the Vital Force*, based upon these studies. The baron was also fascinated with people who were sleepwalkers or suffered from "night cramps" which had no apparent cause. He studied the theories of Dr Mesmer and determined that these maladies were of a physical, not emotional, nature and could not be cured by hypnosis. Mesmerism did not

light emanating from crystals when enclosed in complete darkness. The one common factor seemed to be a reaction to moonlight, so Reichenbach set up an impressive laboratory in Castle Reisenberg in which he could study dozens of sensitives.

He discovered that many of these sensitives had an allergic reaction to moonlight, especially in the red and green spectra. They were also able to feel the effects of moonlight from the castle's interior, leading Reichenbach to hypothesise that moonbeams carry an energy which is independent from light energy. Only the protective layers of woollen clothing, leather and piles of paper were able to block out the effects of the moonlight upon these sensitives.

Moonlight, especially in the red range, caused somnambulism and other maladies like cramps in some sensitives. They required the cooling rays of violet sunshine to counteract these unpleasant sensations. Sleepwalkers, on the other hand, were craving moonlight, which forced them into their nocturnal wanderings. Reichenbach was able to expose his subjects to the rays in which they were deficient—either positive moonlight or negative sunlight—in order to treat their maladies. He also discovered that humans have positive and negative polarity within their bodies.

Reichenbach postulated an energy which contains the properties of light, gas and even fluid so it can penetrate far beyond the reaches of each property. He called it *Od* energy, and believed that the odic force permeates the universe: "Od is a cosmic force that radiates from star to star, and has the whole universe for its field, just like light and heat." (Regush, p. 30)

The odic field can be conducted through wire at 13 feet per second, depending on the wire density rather than conductivity. Some odic fields are focused as light through a lens, while another part of the odic field can flow around.



Baron Karl von Reichenbach, 1788–1869

involve hypnotic suggestion at all, but channelled a mysterious energy which passed between the practitioner and patient, he determined.

Reichenbach tried to formulate a theory for these maladies, including electric, magnetic and allergic, but they all fell short. He was intrigued that many of these people were also able to perceive

Reichenbach summarised these properties of Od:

1. Sensitives feel effects of it in moonlight.
2. This conducted energy is not light itself but can be carried by light beams.
3. This can produce physical sensations in sensitives, such as cramps and sleepwalking.
4. It can be absorbed and conducted along metal wires.
5. It is neither electrical nor magnetic energy.
6. It becomes radiant when discharged from points across space.
7. Matter could store this energy for prolonged periods.
8. Mirrors could reflect currents.
9. All sensitives give similar, independent reports.

In his special darkroom in his laboratory, the baron studied the various qualities of Od energy from the Sun and the Moon. Pure sunlight produced the strongest odic emanations, while refracted sunlight was weaker. Sunlight contained a negative polarity and moonlight a surplus of positive energy. Glass-refracted sunlight was coolest at the violet end of the spectrum and irritating at the red band. Depending on their personal energetic deficiencies, different people desired specific colourations.

These celestial odic forces also inhabit the sky, planets and stars, he discovered. Sensitives were able to feel soothing, cool sensations from the Milky Way and unpleasant warmth from the planets. Jupiter became unbearable for some sensitives, leading Reichenbach to speculate that the stars have a cool polarity and the planets a warm polarity.

Reichenbach studied the various manifestations of this vital force in its relationship to electricity, magnetism, light, crystals, metals, water and chemistry. Metals and minerals emanated their own colours and were affected differently in solar and lunar light. Water absorbed odic forces in sunlight and moonlight, manifesting different tastes from "cool" to "nauseous". He showed the Od's connection to the phenomenon of water-witching or dowsing, Mesmerism and similar psychic subjects.

Crystals created the strongest odic emanations in the mineral world. The sensitives were not only able to see colours, but also had physical reactions such as muscle cramping, tetany,

wakefulness or deep sleep. Metals conducted with crystalline Od produced powerful shocks to the sensitives.

Reichenbach's English translator, Dr Ashburner, produced several remarkable crystalline Od detectors, with eight or nine large mountain crystals of quartz wrapped in great silk-insulated coils. When enclosed with a platinum "keeper", they produced an odic charge of shocking power. The baron speculated that

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crystalline Od provides crystals with a vital, living force.

In Reichenbach's experiments, the vegetable kingdom was shown to give off powerful Od. Copper wires were wrapped around different plants, producing various odic reactions of cold and hot. Most of the blooms were warm in the stem and cold in the flowers, leaving Reichenbach to hypothesise that the warm sections were displaying accelerated growth rates. Vegetative odic force determined the medicinal efficacy of a plant, as every plant had its own vibration.

Reichenbach's sensitives were always able to see auras around magnets and often around people. When the baron created a rooftop laboratory of large metal plates, wire braids and solid wires conducting down into the experimental chamber, he was astonished to find that he was also able

to view the odic force as a natural phosphorescence which connects all things together. This force, a "self-luminant", was seen as not an inert force but a personal force which could influence observers.

The baron studied the aura and spoke of its "radiant light which, undetected, sweeps into space". He noted the differences between male and female auras, as well as those from people of different ages and temperaments. Sensitives were able to diagnose illness in the auras of others and could even look into the auric bodies and anatomical chambers of others, observing illness and even detecting "lesions" and "dark markings".

In 1861, Reichenbach discovered that lens-focused Od light could produce images on daguerreotype plates. These odographs were made by the Od light projected from crystal points, fingertips, magnets, metals and chemicals, sometimes showing the transfer of Od light from one material to another. Lenses were used to intensify these effects in certain plates—a method used later by Dr Kilner and Semyon Kirlian.

Baron Karl von Reichenbach's forgotten research laid the foundations of later disciplines such as psychology, radionics, aura photography, energy medicine and new-age modalities such as crystal and colour therapy. He was one of the 19th century's most brilliant, but forgotten, geniuses.

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#### About the Author:

Karen Mutton, BA, DipEd, is the author of *Pioneers of the Aura* (2007), from which these edited extracts are taken (the e-book is available from her webpage <http://www.karenmutton.com/rampa/pioneers.html>). She has a passion for ancient history, alternative medicine, geology, astronomy and esoterica, and has travelled the world visiting important archaeological sites. Her previous contribution to NEXUS was "T. Lobsang Rampa: New Age Trailblazer" (vol. 13, nos 2–3), extracted from her e-book of the same name.

Karen can be contacted by email at [karenmutton@optusnet.com.au](mailto:karenmutton@optusnet.com.au).